

# Wind program taking off

SPECIAL TO THE QCS

One of the tallest structures on Route 66 in Tucumcari is the landmark turbine for the North American Wind Training Center (NAWTC) at Mesalands Community College.

The wind program's first year has exceeded all expectations and the coming year is already looking bright. Mesalands has a new Director of NAWTC, new instructors, preparing for a new class of wind energy students, and will soon have a new wind energy facility.

The wind energy program at Mesalands had a slow start, but took off after a national promotion was launched and the College's 1.5 megawatt turbine was installed.

The turbine is approximately 400 feet tall and is dubbed "The Tallest Classroom in the World."

The turbine is a commercial capacity unit manufactured by General Electric that has education and training as its primary purpose.

Money to finance the project included \$2.1 million from Gov. Bill Richardson and New Mexico legislators for the purchase, installation, and grid connection of the wind turbine.

Travis Lee, a wind student from Muscatine, Iowa, was impressed by the presence of a full-scale, operational turbine on campus. He will be starting his second year in the wind program and says safety is Mesalands' top priority.

"Before you do anything else in working on turbines you need good safety training, and that is what we are learning first thing," Lee said.

Lee is one of 13 wind energy students returning in the fall to complete their associate's degree in Wind Energy



Courtesy of Mesalands Community College

A wind turbine rests against the skyline of Tucumcari Mountain. Mesalands Community College's wind turbine is 400 feet tall.

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Technology.

The new freshmen class of wind energy students is already full.

There are currently 39 students enrolled for the second wind energy class.

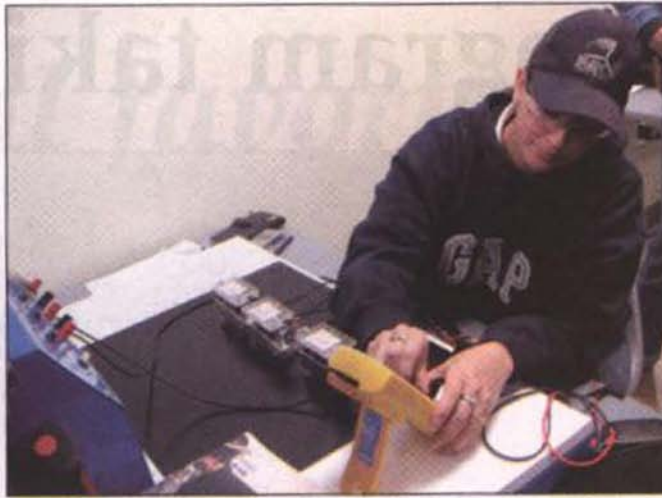
Although the majority of the students are coming from New Mexico, some are traveling from places like Alaska, Michigan, Nevada, Texas, Florida, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Arizona, California, and New Hampshire.

Incoming wind energy students can look forward to new staff members.

John Hail Jr. is the new Wind Energy Technology Program Director/Instructor and brings years of experience as a technician of wind turbines. Most recently he was the Lead Technician at Mitsubishi Power Systems at



Hail



Courtesy of Mesalands Community College

A Wind Energy student gains hands-on experience working on electrical systems in the lab.

Caprock Wind Farm in San Jon.

"I am very excited and look forward to the challenge," Hail said. "I'm looking forward to working with the community, industry and students."

The newly appointed

Director of NAWRTC is Jim Morgan. He is currently the Director of Technology at Mesalands and will take over his new position on July 1, 2009. Morgan served 20 years in the U.S. Navy and has over 30 years of experience in

nuclear technology.

Troy Carpenter will be the new Wind Energy Technology Instructor. Carpenter has nearly two years experience as a technician of wind turbines. He was the Level II Technician for General Electric Wind Energy in Schenectady, N.Y.

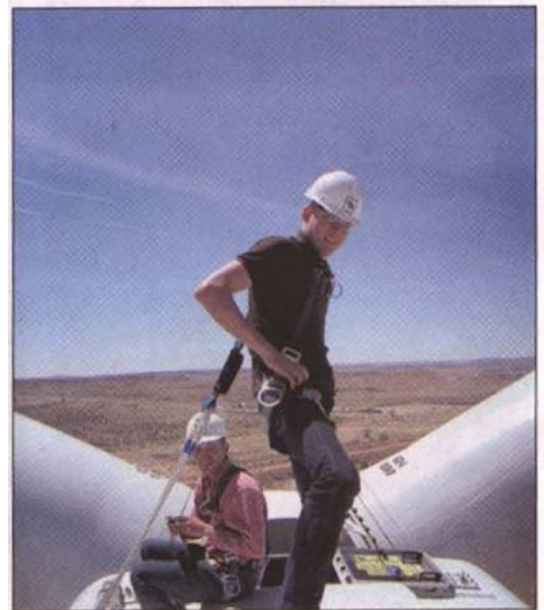


Morgan

Mesalands is also looking forward to a new wind energy facility. The college received a \$7 million bond from the General Obligation Bond legislation in November 2008. The college plans to break ground at the end of this year.

"Once the facility is built the program will escalate," Hail said. "This will seal the entire program in one package."

Additional information about Mesalands can be obtained at 911 S. 10th St. in Tucumcari, or at 461-4413, or on the Web at [www.mesalands.edu](http://www.mesalands.edu).



Courtesy of Mesalands Community College

Wind Energy students "study" on top of the "Tallest Classroom in the World."